

Route 116 Stage Gulch Road Curve Improvement and Realignment Project

SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
DISTRICT 4 – SON – 116, KP 67.3/71.9 (PM 41.8/44.7)
Expenditure Authorization 283800

Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration



November 2004



Prepared by the State of California
Department of Transportation



GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

What's in this document:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) has prepared this Initial Study with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, which examines the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives being considered for the proposed project located in Sonoma County, California. The document describes why the project is being proposed, alternatives for the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, the potential impacts from each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures.

What you should do:

- Please read this Initial Study. Additional copies of this document as well as the technical studies are available for review at the district office, 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland, California 94623, as well as two branches of the Sonoma County Public Library:

Petaluma Branch	Sonoma Branch
100 Fairgrounds Drive	755 West Napa
Petaluma	Sonoma

- Attend public informational meeting on November 17, 2004
- We welcome your comments. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please attend the meeting on November 17, 2004 and/or send your written comments to the Department by the deadline of December 15, 2004.
- Submit comments via postal mail to:

Valerie Heusinkveld, Environmental Branch Chief
Attention: Seana L. S. Gause
Dept. of Transportation, Office of Environmental Analysis
111 Grand Avenue
Oakland, CA 94623

- Submit comments via email to seana_gause@dot.ca.gov.
- Submit comments by the deadline: December 15, 2004.

What happens next:

After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, the Department may: (1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, (2) undertake additional environmental studies, or (3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, the Department could design and construct all or part of the project.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to Department of Transportation, Attn: Seana L.S. Gause, Office of Environmental Analysis, 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland, CA 94623; (510) 286-6336 Voice, or use the California Relay Service TTY number, (800) 735-2929.

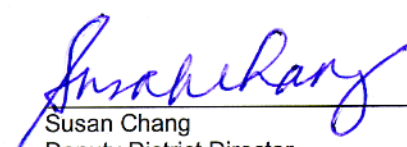
SCH#
04-SON-116-KP 67.3/71.9
(PM 41.8/44.7)
EA: 283800

**Route 116 Stage Gulch Road Curve Improvement and Realignment Project, KP 67.3 (PM 41.8) to KP
71.9 (PM 44.7), Sonoma County, California**

INITIAL STUDY with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation



Susan Chang
Deputy District Director
Office of Environmental Analysis and Environmental Engineering
California Department of Transportation - District 04

10/26/2004

Date of Approval

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Department) proposes to widen the shoulders of State Route 116 to standard widths between Adobe Road and Arnold Drive, and improve some nonstandard curves. The radius of horizontal curves will be increased at least to the standard for this type of facility (two lane highway). Improving the roadway just west of Transfer Station Road (aka County Dump Road) without impinging on an environmentally-sensitive area will necessitate realigning the highway for about 1.2 km (0.75 m) in that area. The existing roadway near Transfer Station Road will be realigned to avoid an environmentally sensitive area. Several retaining walls are proposed to minimize the need to acquire additional state right-of-way.

Determination

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is the Department's intent to adopt an MND for this project. This does not mean that the Department's decision regarding the project is final. This MND is subject to modification based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

The Department has prepared an Initial Study for this project, and pending public review, expects to determine from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant impact on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed project would have no effect on air, noise, hazardous materials, growth, public utilities, or cultural resources.

The proposed project would have no significantly adverse effect on biological resources or on water quality because the following mitigation measures would reduce potential effects to beneath the level of significance:

- Creek restoration to mitigate loss of critical habitat for threatened and endangered species; and
- Implementation of Best Management Practices to protect water quality, including bioswales and retention ponds.

The remaining resources located within the project area are expected to be affected; however, that effect is not expected to be significant.

Susan Chang
Deputy District Director of Environmental Planning
and Engineering
California Department of Transportation - District 4

Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Sheet	i
Title Page	ii
Mitigated Negative Declaration (Draft)	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Maps, Figures and Photos	vii
1 CHAPTER 1 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED.....	1-1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1-1
1.1.1 Scope and Project Location	1-1
1.1.1.1 Purpose	1-1
1.1.1.2 Need	1-1
1.1.1.3 Traffic Safety Context	1-4
1.1.1.4 Existing Facilities	1-4
1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	1-6
1.2.1 Proposed Project	1-6
1.3 Alternatives.....	1-6
2 CHAPTER 2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	2-1
2.1 FARMLANDS	2-1
2.1.1 Regulatory Setting	2-1
2.1.2 Affected Environment.....	2-1
2.1.3 Project Impacts	2-1
2.2 COMMUNITY IMPACTS.....	2-1
2.2.1 Affected Environment.....	2-1
2.2.2 Project Impacts	2-2
2.3 UTILITIES / EMERGENCY SERVICES.....	2-2
2.3.1 Utilities	2-2
2.3.1.1 Affected Environment	2-2
2.3.1.2 Project Impacts.....	2-2
2.3.2 Emergency Services	2-2
2.3.2.1 Affected Environment	2-2
2.3.2.2 Project Impacts.....	2-2
2.3.2.3 Mitigation Measures	2-3
2.4 TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION	2-3
2.4.1 Affected Environment.....	2-3
2.4.2 Environmental Impacts	2-3
2.5 VISUAL / AESTHETICS	2-3
2.5.1 Affected Environment.....	2-3
2.5.2 Project Impacts	2-4
2.5.3 Mitigation Measures	2-7

2.6	CULTURAL RESOURCES	2-7
2.6.1	Regulatory Setting	2-7
2.6.2	Affected Environment	2-8
2.6.3	Project Impacts	2-8
2.7	HYDROLOGY AND FLOODPLAIN	2-8
2.7.1	Affected Environment	2-8
2.7.2	Project Impacts	2-9
2.7.3	Mitigation Measures	2-9
2.8	WATER QUALITY AND STORM WATER RUNOFF	2-9
2.8.1	Regulatory Setting	2-9
2.8.2	Affected Environment	2-10
2.8.3	Project Impacts	2-10
2.8.4	Mitigation Measures	2-10
2.9	GEOLOGY / SOILS / SEISMIC / TOPOGRAPHY	2-12
2.9.1	TOPOGRAPHY AND SEISMICITY	2-12
2.9.1.1	Affected Environment	2-12
2.9.1.2	Impacts and Protective Measures	2-13
2.9.2	SITE GEOLOGY AND SOILS	2-13
2.9.2.1	Affected Environment	2-13
2.9.2.2	Impacts and Protective Features	2-14
2.10	BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT	2-14
2.10.1	NATURAL COMMUNITIES	2-14
2.10.1.1	Affected Environment	2-15
2.10.1.2	Project Impacts	2-16
2.10.1.3	Minimization and Mitigation Measures	2-16
2.10.2	WETLANDS AND OTHER WATERS	2-17
2.10.2.1	Regulatory Setting	2-17
2.10.2.2	Affected Environment	2-17
2.10.2.3	Project Impacts	2-17
2.10.2.4	Minimization and Mitigation Measures	2-17
2.10.3	ANIMAL SPECIES	2-18
2.10.3.1	Regulatory Setting	2-18
2.10.3.2	Affected Environment	2-18
2.10.3.3	Project Impacts	2-18
2.10.3.4	Minimization and Mitigation Measures	2-19
2.10.4	THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES	2-19
2.10.4.1	Regulatory Setting	2-19
2.10.4.2	Affected Environment	2-20
2.10.4.3	Project Impacts	2-23
2.10.4.4	Avoidance and Minimization Measures	2-23
2.11	TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS	2-24
2.11.1	Affected Environment	2-24
2.11.2	Project Impacts	2-24
2.11.3	Mitigation Measures	2-24
2.12	CUMULATIVE IMPACTS	2-25
2.12.1	Regulatory Setting	2-25
2.12.2	Affected Environment	2-25
2.12.3	Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures	2-25

3	CHAPTER 3 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	3-1
3.1	CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES.....	3-1
3.2	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.....	3-2
3.3	AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE.....	3-3
4	CHAPTER 4 LIST OF PREPARERS.....	4-1
5	CHAPTER 5 DISTRIBUTION LIST	4-1
6	CHAPTER 6 REFERENCES	4-1
	APPENDIX	4-1

List of Figures, Maps and Photos

Figure A: Project Plans	
1 Overview	7-2
2 Overview	7-3
3 Layout 5 Close-up	7-4
4 Layout 6 Close-up	7-5
5 Layout 7 Close-up	7-6
6 Layout 8 Close-up	7-7
Figure B: Existing and Simulated Conditions Before and After Proposed Project	
1 Photo of Existing Conditions on Highway 116.....	2-5
2 Photo simulation of proposed retaining wall at same location.....	2-5
Figure C: Existing and Simulated Conditions Before and After Proposed Project	
1 Photo of Existing Conditions on Highway 116.....	2-5
2 Photo simulation of proposed retaining wall at same location.....	2-5
Figure D: Existing and Simulated Conditions Before and After Proposed Project	
1 Existing Highway 116 looking eastward just west of Watmaugh Road.....	2-6
2 Photo simulation of proposed conditions at same location.....	2-6
Figure E: County Map of Sonoma showing the approximate location of the Sonoma 116 Curve Improvement and Widening Project and the proximity of the 13 historical sightings of California red-legged frog in the county as indicated by the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB, September 26, 2003) and Caltrans	2-22
Photo 1: Mature California red-legged frog observed by Caltrans staff during field review immediately north of Transfer Station Road in Champlin Creek (August 27, 2004)	2-21
Map 1: Project Vicinity	1-2
Map 2: Project Location	1-3